

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Hyaluronic acid butyric esters which the hydroxyl groups of hyaluronic acid are partially esterified with butyric residues, characterised by a degree of substitution with butyric residues (ratio of number of butyric acid residues to disaccharide units GicNAc-GicUA of hyaluronic acid) being equal or below 0.1. These esters with low degree of substitution are obtained by a process carried out in the homogeneous phase under anhydrous conditions, wherein hyaluronic acid is used in the form of a quaternary nitrogen salt. The esters have a greater antiproliferative activity than corresponding esters with higher degree of substitution, and are particularly active against primary and metastatic tumours, where the tumours are primary of hepatic origin, or are hepatic metastases. A further aspect is represented by pharmaceutical compositions, containing as active principle at least one of the esters.